

The Driver's Checklist

Parents and teens need to review some basic automotive tips for safe driving. Driving is dangerous business, and teens sometimes are impatient. So parents must supervise, correct, and set a good example.

BEFORE YOU START

Before every trip, have your teen do the following:

- Fasten seatbelt
- Adjust seat position
- Adjust rearview mirror and side mirrors
- Adjust steering wheel
- Lock doors
- Take a careful look in all directions

WHILE YOUR TEEN IS DRIVING

- Know the speed limit on the road. Keep speed at or below the posted speed limit.
- Keep the focus of your attention forward, but constantly checking rearview mirrors. Know what is behind you and how far it is from your back bumper.
- Concentrate on the job at hand. Avoid distractions, since the job is about paying attention!
- Look down the road as far as you can and then concentrate on the flow of traffic and the vehicles in your lane.

- On larger highways stay in the right lane unless passing.
- Position the car so that the middle of the hood is aligned with the shoulder of the road.
- Be a defensive driver.

SPECIAL DANGERS TO DISCUSS WITH BEGINNING TEEN DRIVERS

- Never cross a railroad track unless it is clear in all directions or a signal indicates that it is clear.
- Do not tailgate. It is considered provocative behavior.
- While approaching bicyclists, share the road, slow down while passing, and give them plenty of room.
- If you can see a driver in one of your mirrors, they can see you.
- Traffic signals apply to drivers, motorcycle riders, bicyclists, moped riders, and pedestrians.

PARENTS: You are the example of safe driving your teen is watching—set a good example.

A FEW MORE TIPS . . .

If you approach a flashing red traffic light, come to a complete stop, yield the right-of-way to traffic within the intersection or crosswalk, and proceed when safe. This sign is used at dangerous intersections or when a stop sign alone is hard to see. Flashing red lights are also used at railroad crossings to warn of approaching trains. Stop. You must come to a complete stop even if the train is not present. Never try to beat a train to a crossing.

A steady yellow light or arrow indicates that the light is about to change. If you have not entered the intersection, you should come to a stop. If you are already in the intersection, continue moving in order to clear it. Never speed up to avoid stopping at a red light, since this dangerous behavior can cause a crash.